



News Release

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ENERGY CONSERVATION LOANS **CAN HELP COMBAT RISING NATURAL GAS COSTS**

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Idahoans facing a 33 percent increase in natural gas prices have an easy way to help offset the steep rise in natural gas costs via a low interest energy conservation loan from the Idaho Energy Division, loan program managers said today.

Idaho consumers can use the 4 percent interest, 5-year loans to add insulation to their homes and also to upgrade older gas furnaces and hot water heaters to new high efficiency models. Loans are not available to upgrade windows.

Increasing insulation in a dwelling can often significantly reduce heating and cooling costs at the same time it improves comfort, energy conservation specialists said. A substantial reduction in natural gas usage can also be realized by upgrading older, inefficient gas furnaces and water heaters to the newer high efficiency versions.

Residential energy conservation loans must be a minimum of \$1,000 and can run up to \$10,000. Loan officials say people should look at combining a series of conservation moves into one package, to both meet the minimum and to speed up the process.

Commercial energy conservation loans are also available and can go up to \$100,000. The higher amount opens the door to business upgrading insulation and gas heating and hot water systems and computer control systems.

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Loan specialists say it takes typically three to four weeks to process a loan. They recommend individuals or business interested in energy conservation loans apply as soon as possible so funding can be provided and projects completed before winter gets here, with its typical higher heating bills.

The Idaho Energy Division loan program is now in its 17th year of existence. Since its inception in 1987 the program has funded a total of 2,385 loans totaling \$15.3 million dollars.

Loan information and application forms are available on the Internet at: **www.idwr.state.id.us/energy/loans**. You can also call loan program staff by telephone at (208) 327-7873 or the toll-free Idaho Energy Hotline at 1-800-334-7283.

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